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The Lady of the Lake

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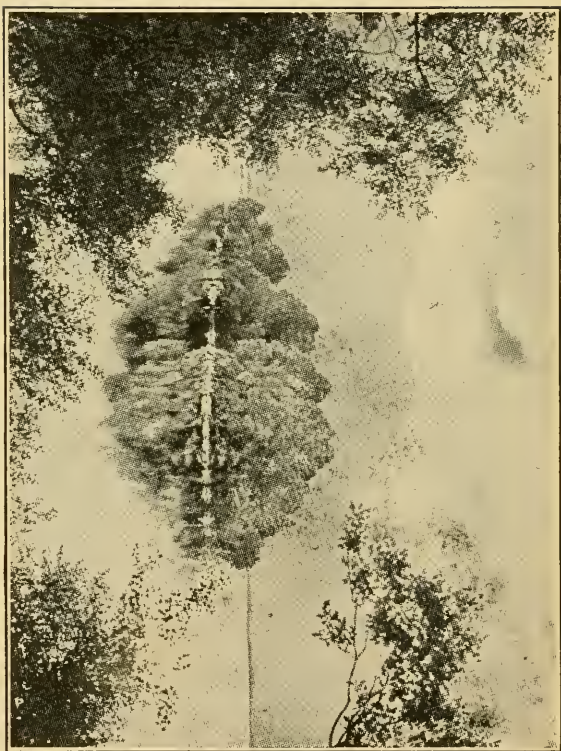
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ELLEN'S ISLE IN LOCH KATRINE

THE
LADY OF THE LAKE

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT

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PREFACE

This edition of "The Lady of the Lake" is the fruit of long experience in teaching the poem. In preparing the notes, the editor has enjoyed the invaluable assistance of Miss Marion G. Rattray, M. A., University of Edinburgh, and teacher of English in the Borough Muir School, Edinburgh, who served for a time as exchange teacher in the Lynchburg High School. Miss Rattray's nationality, her training, and her experience in teaching this poem on both sides of the water render her an able judge of the explanatory matter concerning Scotch flowers and shrubbery needed by the American High School student. Indeed, it is believed that in no other edition of the poem has the same attention been paid to the flora of Scotland. The point is of importance, too, since Scott alludes to flowers and trees throughout "The Lady of the Lake." Thanks are also due Dr. H. J. Eckenrode for his careful and scholarly review of the manuscript.

EVELINA O. WIGGINS.

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	7
I. Foreword to Teachers	7
II. Life and Works of Sir Walter Scott.....	8
III. The Poem	17
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.....	
Canto First	25
Canto Second	52
Canto Third	82
Canto Fourth	109
Canto Fifth	138
Canto Sixth	169
NOTES AND SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.....	201

INTRODUCTION

I

FOREWORD TO TEACHERS

"The Lady of the Lake" should be read primarily for pleasure, but it presents unusual difficulties to the average high school student because of its local Scottish background and its many allusions to Scottish history and tradition. Though the poem should not be converted into a guide-book to Scotland, the enjoyment of its beauties is dependent to a considerable extent on a knowledge of the historical setting and the topography. The notes to the present edition seek to give the kind of explanation which experience has taught the editor is desirable for high school students.

An excellent map faces the notes, and the geographical allusions should be worked out as the poem is read. The pupil's interest is aroused in tracing the course of the hunt, the journey of the Fiery Cross, and the ride to Stirling, and with little conscious effort he acquires an understanding of the times and customs which the poem describes.

The "Tales of a Grandfather" should be used as a reference book to "The Lady of the Lake;" and other valuable works are Lockhart's "Life of Scott," Hutton's "Life of Scott," and Scott's novels, "Waverley" and "The Fair Maid of Perth." If detailed work in the metre is desired, Gummere's "Hand-book of Poetics" is probably the best for school use.

Excellent opportunities are offered for memory work in

this poem. Some of the longer selections which may be employed as class exercises are mentioned in the notes. In addition, many one-line identifications, such as "Pattern of old fidelity," may be learned to advantage. The teacher should always keep in mind the interest in the story as a story. In this connection, it is well to read stirring scenes through in class before going on to the analysis of particular words and phrases. "The Lady of the Lake" is a thrilling tale, and if students are brought to see this, their interest in everything connected with it will be greatly stimulated.

II

LIFE AND WORKS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

Sir Walter Scott has been called the "Wizard of the North" on account of the wonderful pictures of Scottish life on the border and in the Highlands that he has painted in his poems and stories. In the opening stanzas of "The Lady of the Lake," he invokes the "Harp of the North," the long-silent spirit of Scottish minstrelsy, to help him sing, as the old minstrels had sung, and it would seem that his prayer was answered. His love of romance must have been inherited from his border ancestry, for he could trace his descent from a fighting chieftain, "Auld Wat of Harden." His own father, Walter Scott, however, had settled down in Edinburgh to the unromantic profession of the law.

It was in that city that the great writer was born, on August 15, 1771. An illness at eighteen months of age left Scott weak and lame, and his family wisely sent him to the home of his grandfather in the country, where he

spent his early childhood. Scott thus describes himself as he was at this time:

"It was here . . . that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies resorted to to aid my lameness, some one had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swarthed up in the skin warm as it was flayed from the carcass of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlor in the farm house, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George McDougal of Mackerstown in his old fashioned military habit . . . kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year."

At his grandfather's house Walter heard many old tales of border warfare and he early showed an intense love for poetry. He liked to recite the ballad of "Hardyknute," sometimes to the annoyance of his grandfather's visitor, Dr. Duncan, the worthy clergyman of the parish, who did not like to have his chat so interrupted, and would exclaim impatiently, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is!"

The farm at Sandy Knowe was well stocked with sheep, and Sir Walter says, "When the day was fine, I was usually carried out, and laid down beside the old shepherd among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my

infirmity, and I began by degrees, to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air, and, in a word, I, who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child."

When eight years old Scott returned to Edinburgh, where he attended school at the Grammar or High School. He says of this time, "I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity, as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions, my good-nature and a flow of ready imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts that I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address, what I lacked in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favor; and in winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Luckie Brown's fireside, and happy was he who could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. I was also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends, and hence I had a little party of staunch partizans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head, the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So on the whole I made a brighter figure in the yards than in the class."

On leaving the high school, Scott went back to the country for a while to recruit his health, which had begun to suffer again. It was at this time that he came across

a book which had a marked effect on his poetic development, Bishop Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." He says of it, "I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor in the garden. . . . The summer day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, and was found still entranced in my intellectual banquet."

Scott next entered the University of Edinburgh, where he made no especial mark as a student, and at fifteen years of age he began the study of law in his father's office. Though he eventually became a good lawyer, his real interest lay elsewhere—in the romantic past of Scotland—and he spent much of his time in delving into old stories and in going on walking and riding trips into the border country and the Highlands. In spite of his lame leg, he could easily walk thirty miles a day, and his father is reported to have said that Walter would make a better peddler than lawyer.

In the second year of his apprenticeship in his father's office, Scott suffered a severe illness which kept him long abed. "While I lay in this dreary and silent solitude," he says, "I fell upon the resource of illustrating the battles I read of, by the childish expedient of arranging shells and seeds and pebbles, so as to represent encountering armies. Diminutive cross-bows were contrived to mimic artillery, and with the assistance of a friendly carpenter, I contrived to model a fortress which represented whatever place happened to be uppermost in my imagination. I fought my way thus through Vertot's 'Knight of Malta,' a book which was exceedingly dear to me."

Scott's first effort in literature was the translation of

some German ballads by Burger. He did this work amid the stirring scenes attending the opening of the great war with France. The British Isles lived in daily fear of a French descent on some unprotected point along the coast, and all over England and Scotland volunteer companies were formed to repel a sudden invasion. Scott showed his zeal by joining a troop of cavalry, serving as quartermaster and taking part in the drills notwithstanding his lameness.

In 1797, while on a tour of the English lake region, he met Charlotte Charpentier, or Carpenter, the daughter of a French refugee. Those who knew her agree that she was a young woman of beauty and charm. Scott, who was just beginning to recover from an earlier and probably most fervent love affair, was so much attracted by her that he married her a few months later.

The couple set up housekeeping in a little place at Lasswade, on the Esk, six miles from Edinburgh. A year after his marriage Scott had the good fortune to receive the appointment of Sheriff of Selkirkshire, with a salary of £300. This office delivered him from the bondage of his profession and enabled him to give much of his time to literature, besides allowing him the opportunity to extend his knowledge of border myths and songs. The result appeared in 1802, when he published his first successful book, "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." It is a collection of old border poems which Scott had been busy gathering and verifying since his childhood. The public interest awakened by this venture encouraged him to continue his poetic efforts.

The duties of Sheriff of Selkirkshire kept Scott on the border for the next twelve years, and in 1804 he leased a place at Ashestiel near the River Tweed. Here he lived a congenial out-door life, studying the country and indulging

his taste for dogs and horses. In 1805 "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was published. It marked a turning-point in Scott's career, for its enthusiastic reception determined him to make literature his calling instead of his pastime. The poem was a success because it happened exactly to hit the public taste. Readers had long since tired of the sing-song eighteenth century poetry, and Scott's fresh and vigorous portrayal of historical events and Scottish scenes created a sensation.

"Marmion," his next poem, was so eagerly looked forward to that his publisher offered him £1,000 for the manuscript without having seen it. "The Lady of the Lake," which is probably Scott's most popular poem, was published in 1810, and was followed in the next few years by "Don Roderick," "Rokeby," "The Bridal of Triermain," "The Lord of the Isles," and "Harold the Dauntless." The author was named for the post of poet laureate but declined, as he was of too independent a spirit to write poetry to order.

During this period, in 1806, Scott was appointed Clerk of the Session, which office, together with that of sheriff, brought him an income sufficient to enable him to devote himself entirely to literature. But we are to hear little more of him as a poet, for he soon discovered his greatest gift, the ability to write the historical novel—a gift which makes his name one of the greatest in literature. Many writers before this had attempted to write historical romances, but they had all failed. Scott succeeded because he had the two things needed—a warm and glowing imagination and a deep knowledge of the life and customs of the past. His historical poems were a preparation for the historical novels.

He had moved in 1812 to a new home called Abbotsford,

further down the Tweed, where he spent the latter years of his life. Here, in 1814, his genius as a fiction-writer showed itself. He worked into shape a sketch of Scottish life, written long before, and printed it under the name of "Waverley." This book took the reading public by storm; everybody recognized that a literary star of the first magnitude had arisen. During the next eighteen years there followed in rapid succession twenty-eight novels, painting on a vivid and dramatic background the people and customs of bygone ages. The whole series took the name of "Waverley Novels," and the best of them, according to modern criticism, are "Guy Mannering," "Old Mortality," "The Heart of Midlothian," and "The Bride of Lammermoor."

At Abbotsford Scott lived on a more pretentious scale than he had before. He bought several nearby farms, built a splendid mansion on the river-bank, cut roads, planted trees, and made such large improvements that the estate was known as one of the show places of Scotland. He entertained a constant succession of relatives, friends, and distinguished guests, and the hospitality of Abbotsford became proverbial. In 1820 Scott was made a baronet, and he hoped to found a new house of Scott, where all the members of the family might gather at the fireside, as in the old border days they had gathered in the chieftain's home.

His family then consisted of his wife and four children, Charlotte, Walter, Anne, and Charles. He was a devoted father—never too busy to answer his children's questions, or tell them the tales and legends with which his memory was stored. He trained them by out-door sports to become hardy and courageous; as soon as Sophia, his eldest daughter, was old enough, she was put on horseback and came to be her father's constant riding companion, even on

rough mountain excursions. He was most careful of his children's moral training, and often quoted to them an old Persian proverb, "Without courage there cannot be truth, and without truth there cannot be any other virtue."

Scott's novels made him the most prosperous writer of the time. He disliked notoriety and for years he kept his authorship of the "Waverley Novels" secret; in his home circle, where, of course, the secret was open, he was playfully spoken of as "The Great Unknown."

But the time came when the secret had to be revealed. Scott had become a silent partner in the printing-house of Ballantyne and Company, managed by the Ballantyne Brothers, John and James, his old school-fellows. The firm failed in 1826 and Sir Walter suddenly found himself saddled with a debt of £117,000, which he had not contracted himself and for which he was bound solely through his secret partnership with the Ballantynes.

The calamity brought out the noblest trait of his character—his absolute honesty. Instead of taking advantage of the bankrupt law, he honorably decided to try to pay the whole amount. His friends offered to aid him to make an arrangement with the creditors, but he declined, saying, "No, this right hand shall work it all off." He at once turned over his property, without exception, let it be known that he was the author of the "Waverley Novels," and agreed to "continue his literary labor with his best diligence" until the debt was wiped out. This decision demanded a magnificent courage. At the time Scott was fifty-five years old and in rather bad health, and although he was considered the foremost literary figure of the day, the task was so colossal that it broke him down and hastened his death.

In the year of the failure, Lady Scott died at

Abbotsford. The night following Scott wrote in his diary, "Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne;" (his two sons were living away from home, and Sophia was married) "an impoverished, and embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels. . . . I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years."

In spite of his misfortunes, the broken writer continued the struggle with splendid energy. He wrote six more novels, "A Life of Napoleon," "Tales of a Grandfather," "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," and "A History of Scotland." At his death funds were available to pay off the last of the debt, which was thus settled but at great cost to himself. As Lockhart wrote of him, "He saved his honor and his self-respect, but paid the penalty of his health and life."

In the fall of 1831 Sir Walter's condition was such that his physicians ordered a rest. The king, George IV., placed a frigate at his command for a trip to the Mediterranean, and the whole nation followed his movements with intense interest and sympathy. Wordsworth wrote:

"The might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptered King, or laureled conqueror knows
Follow this wondrous Potentate."

It was too late for rest and change to be of benefit. Scott suffered a stroke of apoplexy in Germany the following spring and grew anxious to return home for the end. He was brought from the continent to London, and thence to Abbotsford in July 1832. Through a great part of the

journey he was unconscious, but he revived as he neared his beloved home, and we are told that a cry of delight sprang to his lips when he caught the first glimpse of the towers of Abbotsford. The greeting of a faithful old retainer and the joy of his dogs, who gathered about his chair, fawning upon him and licking his hands, brought tears to his eyes and gladness to his heart. For a short while after his return he was so much better that he could be wheeled about the garden and enjoy the society of his family. By the middle of August he even tried to use his pen again, but his fingers had lost their grip. He lingered until September 21, 1832, when the end came, very quietly and peacefully.

Lockhart fittingly closes the scene: "It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles was distinctly audible, as we knelt around his bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes. No sculptor ever modeled a more majestic image of repose."

III

THE POEM

"The Lady of the Lake" is a picture—a wonderfully vivid picture—of Scottish life in the early sixteenth century. It does not deal with such events as war on the border, like "Marmion," but solely with Scotland itself—with the struggles of king and nobles for power and with the warfare between the two great sections of the country.

Scotland is parted by a sharp division. Southern Scotland, the Lowlands, is an Anglo-Saxon country much like

England, while northern Scotland, the Highlands, is held by people of Celtic or Gaelic blood. Once upon a time, all the British Isles were inhabited by Celts, but the invading Saxons and Danes, and later Normans, overran England, southern Scotland and a part of Ireland.

The Lowlands form the region from the English frontier to the River Forth. It is a land of moors and meadows and rolling hills, well-adapted to sheep-raising and farming. The Lowlanders were of the same blood as the English and had similar laws, institutions and manners. In the sixteenth century, Scotland south of the Forth was a civilized land, ruled by nobles of Saxon or Norman origin and containing a thrifty and hard-working farming population. Edinburgh was the capital, though the king lived much of the time at Stirling.

The early kings of Scotland were Celts, but the throne at last passed to Lowland nobles; Robert Bruce, the greatest of Scottish monarchs, was a Lowlander of Norman descent. At the death of the last king of the direct line of Robert Bruce, the House of Stuart came to the throne. The new Stuart kings, however, found a powerful rival in the Douglas family, which held the leading place in the Scottish nobility. The Douglasses owned enormous estates near the English border, and were brave and warlike besides; the history of Scotland for several generations had been little more than the history of this great house, which almost overshadowed the king.

Moved by fear and jealousy, James II. stabbed the Earl of Douglas, the head of the family, at Stirling Castle in 1452. He then drove the Douglasses from the country and seized their enormous property. The family seemed ruined.

But a younger branch of the Douglasses, which had

received a part of the confiscated estates, once more built up the power of the house, until, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, it again threatened the crown. James V., the king ruling Scotland at the time pictured in "The Lady of the Lake," was only a child when his father was killed at Flodden Field in 1513. A struggle followed for the guardianship of the boy, since the party holding the person of the king might rule in his name while he was yet too young to govern. The Earl of Angus, the head of the Douglasses, became the king's guardian, succeeding the Duke of Albany, and ruled Scotland for some years.

But Angus treated the king so rigorously that James V. came to hate him and his family. When James escaped from his guardian in 1528 and assumed the royal power, his first act was to attack the Douglasses. Angus and his kinsmen were banished and their property was forfeited. One member of the family ventured to return to Scotland in spite of the decree of banishment. This was Archibald Douglas, of Kilspindie, an uncle of the Earl of Angus and a man whom James V. had known and liked in his youth. Archibald Douglas was an athlete of such strength and such skill in sports that he was named "Graysteil," after a hero in a popular romance of the day. The king did not receive him very graciously and he died in France not long afterwards. It was he who furnished Scott with the character of Douglas in the poem, in which he is called "James of Bothwell."

The king followed up his victory by endeavoring to make himself master in the border country, where the government had little or no authority. He journeyed to the border with a strong force of troops, under pretense of hunting, and then suddenly seized and executed several border chieftains.

The atmosphere of war was congenial to James V., who was well-versed in military accomplishments and had a taste for adventure. A favorite diversion of his was to wander around the country in disguise, talking with all sorts and conditions of men. On one occasion he was attacked on the road while disguised, and was rescued by a farm laborer named John Howieson. The king, giving Howieson a false name, directed the ploughman to ask for him at Stirling Castle. When Howieson came to the castle, James received him at the door, showed him through the rooms and ended by taking him into the midst of the assembled court. He had told Howieson that the king might be recognized by the fact that he would be the only person present wearing a hat. Howieson, looking about the throng, saw that all but his guide and himself were uncovered. "Then it must be you or me," he said, "for we are the only two with hats on." James was much amused by the incident and gave Howieson the farm on which he worked.

It was one of the ambitions of James V. to reduce the Highlands to obedience. His untimely death, however, put an end to his plans for uniting the two sections of his realm, and the Highlanders remained a people apart until the eighteenth century.

The Highlands form the region stretching north from the Forth to the ocean—a land of desolate moors clothed in heather, of wooded mountains and jewel-like lakes. The inhabitants were not of Saxon, that is, of Teutonic origin, but were pure-blooded Celts. Cut off from the rest of the world and isolated from each other by the mountain ranges, the Highlanders remained a wild and primitive race for centuries, having almost nothing in common with the Lowlanders and hardly recognizing the authority of the King of Scotland. Their chiefs ruled them with the powers

of petty sovereigns. Sir Walter Scott describes the Highlanders in the "Tales of a Grandfather:"

"The inhabitants of the Highlands spoke, and still speak, a language totally different from the Lowland Scots. That last language does not greatly differ from English, and the inhabitants of both countries easily understand each other, though neither of them comprehend the Gaelic, which is the language of the Highlands. The dress of these mountaineers was also different from that of the Lowlanders. They wore a plaid, or mantle of freize, or of a striped stuff called tartan, one end of which being wrapped round the waist, formed a short petticoat, which descended to the knee, while the rest was folded round them like a sort of cloak. They had buskins made of raw hide; and those who could get a bonnet, had that covering for their heads, though many never wore one during their whole lives. . . . They went always armed, carrying bows and arrows, long swords, pole-axes, and daggers for close fight. For defence, they had a round wooden shield, or target, stuck full of nails, and their great men had shirts of mail, not unlike to the flannel shirts now worn, only composed of links of iron instead of threads of worsted. . . .

"This part of the Scottish nation was divided into clans, that is, tribes. The persons composing each of these clans believed themselves all to be descended, at some distant period, from the same common ancestor, whose name they usually bore. Thus, one tribe was called MacDonald, which signifies the sons of Donald . . . and so on. Every one of these tribes had its own separate chief or commander, whom they supposed to be the immediate representative of the great father of the tribe from whom they were all descended. To this chief they paid the most unlimited obedience, and willingly followed his commands in

peace or war; not caring although, in doing so, they transgressed the laws of the King, or went into rebellion against the King himself. Each tribe lived in a valley or district of the mountains, separated from the others; and they often made war upon, and fought desperately with each other. But with the Lowlanders they were always at war. They differed from them in language, in dress, and in manners; and they believed that the richer grounds of the low country had formerly belonged to their ancestors, and therefore they made incursions upon it, and plundered it without mercy. The Lowlanders, on the other hand, equal in courage and superior in discipline, gave many severe checks to the Highlanders; and thus there was almost constant war or discord between them, though natives of the same country."

Scott did not aim at giving the details of history in "The Lady of the Lake." He used history whenever it helped him, but the events and characters are for the most part his own creations, sprung from his fertile imagination. What he did was to give to an age long past a life and vividness which few writers have been able to equal and none to surpass.

There are two main themes in the poem. One deals with the return of a member of the exiled house of Douglas; the other with the contrast between the Highlands and Lowlands. Scott has painted an excellent Highland portrait in Roderick Dhu and his descriptions of Highland dress and manners are most accurate. He has likewise given us a glimpse of Lowland life in the scenes at Stirling.

The story is laid in the Highlands just where they meet the Lowlands, in the country north of Loch Vennachar and east of Loch Katrine, one of the most beautiful sections in

Great Britain. The author was so familiar with his ground that he has painted it in words almost as realistically as if he had thrown it on canvas.

His acquaintance with the region was made as a lad of sixteen, when he was sent to the Highlands with some soldiers for the execution of a legal paper. He often revisited the Highlands and Loch Katrine made a lasting impression on him. "The scenery of Loch Katrine," he says, "was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful and so deeply imprinted on my recollections, was a labour of love, and it was no less so to recall the manners and customs introduced."

In his long poems Scott uses a metre often employed before, though he adapts it somewhat to meet his needs. It is called the iambic tetrameter, which means a line of four accents, with the accent thrown on the second of the two syllables of the foot, as in,

The *no* ble stag was *paus* ing now

But sometimes he inserts lines of three accents, as in

The *spring* ing trout lies still.

And once in a while he uses a foot of three syllables instead of two:

And re *flu* ent through the *pass* of fear.

Occasionally he throws the accent on the first syllable instead of the second, as in

Bear ing be *fore* them in their course.

The introductions to the cantos are written in Spenserian stanzas:

Was *thy* voice mute a *mid* the *fest* al *crowd*.

These variations are introduced to prevent monotony, and they succeed so well that few long poems may be read with less fatigue than "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake." It was Scott's aim to tell a striking, gripping story, and he did this first in verse, and then, more fully and wonderfully still, in his immortal novels.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

CANTO FIRST.

THE CHASE.

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

10 Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's match-
less eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
20 That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:

Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

30 The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

40 As Chief, who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foemen storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;

50 Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
 With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
 And, stretching forward free and far,
 Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

 Yelled on the view the opening pack;
 Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
 To many a mingled sound at once
 The awakened mountain gave response.
 A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
 Clattered a hundred steeds along, ✓
60 Their peal the merry horns rung out,
 A hundred voices joined the shout;
 With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
 No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
 Far from the tumult fled the roe,
 Close in her covert covered the doe,
 The falcon, from her cairn on high,
 Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
 Till far beyond her piercing ken
 The hurricane had swept the glen.
70 Faint, and more faint, its failing din
 Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
 And silence settled, wide and still,
 On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

 Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
 Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
 And roused the cavern where, 't is told,

A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
80 And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
90 With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood gray
That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
100 Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reins were tightened in despair,

When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
110 Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbaited zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view.
120 Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
130 O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,

And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and the death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew:
But thundering as he came prepared,
140 With ready aim and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
150 Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
160 Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
'I little thought, when first thy rein

I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
170 Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With droopping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
180 And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day,
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow

190 Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
200 Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
210 And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower
Found in each clift a narrow bower;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,

Emblems of punishment and pride,
220 Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
230 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
240 Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirrow trace;
And farther as the Hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,

Like castle girdled with its moat ;
250 Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb with footing nice
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid ;
260 And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.
270 High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down to the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world ;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed,
280 And, 'What a scene were here,' he cried,
'For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray;
How blithly might the bugle-horn
Chide on the lake the lingering morn!
How sweet at eve the lover's lute
Chime when the groves were still and mute!
290 And when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell!
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger call
300 To friendly feast and lighted hall.

XVI.

'Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now—beshrew yon nimble deer—
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,

The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place;—
A summer night in greenwood spent
310 Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—
I am alone;—my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried.'

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
320 When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
330 The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand
Just as the Hunter left his stand,

And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
340 Like mounment of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
350 Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
360 Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
An seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
370 Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine in her mirror blue
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
380 Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O, need I tell that passion's name?

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
390 Now on the gale her voice was borne:—

'Father!' she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came;—
'Malcolm, was thine the blast?' the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
'A stranger I,' the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
400 Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
And when a pace was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;—
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
410 Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
420 And weaponless except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied

A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
430 Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
'Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
440 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer.'—
'Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred,' he said;
'No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
450 Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!'—

XXIII.

'I well believe,' the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side,—
'I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allen-bane foretold your plight,—
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
460 Was on the visioned future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be
470 To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.'

XXIV.

The stranger smiled:—'Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
480 Permit me first the task to guide

Your fairy frigate o'er the tide.'
The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
490 Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The darkening mirrow of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger viewed the shore around;
'T was all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
500 That winded through the tangled screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around

The workman's hand had readiest found.
510 Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees overhead
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
520 Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favored flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
530 An instant in this porch she stayed,
And gayly to the stranger said:
'On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!'

XXVII.

'My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee!—
He crossed the threshold,—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.

To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
540 When on the floor he saw displayed,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
550 Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII.

560 The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
'I never knew but one,' he said,
'Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.'
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:

570 'You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand
As in my grasp a hazel wand:
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.'

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
580 To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
590 At length his rank the stranger names,
'The Knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-James;'
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,

And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
'This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
600 Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here.

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race.
610 'T were strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away:—
'Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we east;
620 While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'T is thus our charmed rhymes we sing.'
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Filled up the symphony between.

XXXI.

SONG.

‘Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle’s enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
630 Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o’er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

‘No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor’s clang or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
640 Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark’s shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bitten sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here’s no war-steed’s neigh and champing,
Shouting elans or squadrons stamping.’

XXXII.

She paused,—then, blushing, led the lay,
To grace the stranger of the day.

650

Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED.

660

‘Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumberous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé,
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveill.’

XXXIII.

670

The hall was cleared,—the stranger’s bed,
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen’s spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,

Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor's lost.
680 'Then,—'from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
690 And doubt distracts him at the view,—
O were his senses false or true?
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
700 The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a hemlet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stem and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and, panting with affright,

Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed, •
710 Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
720 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm;
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
'Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
730 Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more,—by manly mind

Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.'
740 His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue.



CANTO SECOND.

THE ISLAND.

I.

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'T is morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired Allan-
bane!

II.

SONG.

10 'Not faster yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

20 'High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battled line,

Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honored meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love's and friendship's smile
Be memory of the lonely isle!

III.

SONG CONTINUED.

30 'But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe:
Remember then thy hap erewhile,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

40 'Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle.'

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reached the mainland side,

And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
50 Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, gray, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening fire;
60 So still he sat as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sat and smiled.—
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
70 While her vexed spaniel from the beach
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepened on her cheek the rose?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;

And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
80 Show me the fair would scorn to spy
And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
But when he turned him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made;
And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
90 So highly did his bosom swell
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts,—the maid, unconscious still,
Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid,—
'Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!'
'T was thus upbraiding conscience said,—
100 'Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phase of Southern tongue;
Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
Another step than thine to spy.'—
'Wake, Allen-bane,' aloud she cried
To the old minstrel by her side,—
'Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,

And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Græme!’
110 Scarce from her lip the word had rushed,
When deep the conscious maiden blushed;
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The minstrel waked his harp,—three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
‘Vainly thou bid’st, O noble maid,’
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
120 ‘Vainly thou bid’st me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march which victors tread
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O, well for me, if mine alone
That dirge’s deep prophetic tone!
130 If, as my tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
Can thus its master’s fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel’s knell!

VIII.

‘But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,
The eve thy sainted mother died;

And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
140 And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.—
O! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
150 One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!

IX.

Soothing she answered him: 'Assuage,
Mine honored friend, the fears of age;
All melodies to thee are known
That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
160 At times unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,
The war-march with the funeral song?—
Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.

My sire, in native virtue great,
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
Not then to fortune more resigned
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
170 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me'—she stooped, and, looking round,
Plucked a blue harebell from the ground,—
'For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower that loves the lea
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows;
180 And when I place it in my hair,
Allen, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair.'
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
190 Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:
'Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honors, thou hast lost!
O, might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To see my favorite's step advance

200 The lightest in the country dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!

XI.

210 'Fair dreams are these,' the maiden cried,—
Light was her accent, yet she sighed,—
'Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footstep spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,—
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day.'—

XII.

220 The ancient bard her glee repressed:
'Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,

Couriers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say!—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
230 Disowned by every noble peer,
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charm expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
240 Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou 'rt so dear
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread,
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane.'—

XIII.

'Minstrel,' the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
'My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow
250 To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrowed o'er her sister's child;

To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
260 A votaress in Maronnan's cell;
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

'Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray,—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
270 But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;
And generous,— save vindictive mood
Or jealous transport chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
280 And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.

The hand that for my father fought
I honor, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
290 Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child,—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
300 A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best,—
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?'

XV.

'What think I of him?—woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
310 The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harbored here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?

What for this island, deemed of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say?—
Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled when at Beltane game
320 Thou ledst the dance with Maleolm Græme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud:
Beware!—But hark! what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
330 Sends the bold pibroch from afar.'

XVI.

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they east,
Again the sun they gave to shine
340 The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,

Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave :
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies ;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke ;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
350 And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
360 Wailed every harsher note away,
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear,
Those thrilling sounds that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
370 Expressed their merry marching on,

Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yelled amain:
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
380 Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased, but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
390 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore.
In such wild cadence as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allen know,
'Roderick Vick Alpine, ho! iro!'
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX.

BOAT SONG.

- Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
400 Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'
- Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
410 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the
mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XX.

- Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
420 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.

Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
430 Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepest glen,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XXI.

With all her joyful female band
440 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land:
'Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
450 And shun to wreathe a victor's brow?'
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,

And when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung:—
'List, Allan-bane! From mainland cast
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours,' she cried, 'the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain-side.'
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
460 She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
470 It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'T is that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 't was an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she that fear—affection's proof—
480 Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allen, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dashed with hasty hand away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
490 On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said:
'Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
500 As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
510 A welcome give more kind and true
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,—
O, it out-beggars all I lost !'

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
520 The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favorite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
530 Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
540 Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;

Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.

550 His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast
As played the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold
When kindled by the tales of old,
560 Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, 'O my sire!' did Ellen say,
'Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late returned? And why'—
The rest was in her speaking eye.
'My child, the chase I follow far,
570 'T is mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft

Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade;
Nor strayed I safe, for all around
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
580 Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me again.'

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
590 The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made
Ere he assembled round the flame
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too; then cast around
600 His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail

Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII.

'Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honored mother;—Ellen,—why,
610 My cousin, turn away thine eye?—
And Græme, in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's sylvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
620 And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
630 So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,

The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show.'

XXIX.

640 Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme,
But from his glance it well appeared
'T was but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:
650 'Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this gray head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
660 Ellen and I will seek apart
The refuge of some forest cell,

There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er.'—

XXX.

'No, by mine honor,' Roderick said,
'So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
670 The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
680 And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!—
Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might say.—
Small need of inroad or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
690 Till the foiled King from pathless glen
Shall bootless turn him home again.'

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean tide's incessant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
700 And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
710 By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
Still for the Douglas-fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak,—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;

- 720 For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
‘Roderick, enough! enough!’ he cried,
‘My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be,— forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
- 730 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne’er
Will level a rebellious spear.
’T was I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
O, seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined!’

XXXIII.

- 740 Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch’s gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions’ shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim’s way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,

750 And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
760 The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
770 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
'Back, beardless boy!' he sternly said,
'Back, minion! holdst thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delayed.'
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
'Perish my name, if aught afford
780 Its Chieftain safety save his sword!'

Thus as they strove their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength:—‘Chieftains, forego!
I hold the first who strikes my foe. —
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
His daughter’s hand is deemed the spoil
790 Of such dishonorable broil?’
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick’s mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen’s scream,
As faltered through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
800 And veiled his wrath in scornful word:
‘Rest safe till morning; pity ’t were
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey with his freeborn clan
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
Malise, what ho!’—his henchman came:
810 ‘Give our safe-conduct to the Græme.’
Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold:

'Fear nothing for thy favorite hold;
The spot an angel deigned to grace
Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Naught here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,'—
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan followed to the strand—
Such was the Douglas's command—
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
830 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 't were safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
840 His ample plaid in tightened fold,
And stripped his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt: 'Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!
The Minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,—
'O, could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
850 Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme
Who loves the chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honored Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.'
860 Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allen^e strained his anxious eye,
Far mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
870 Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

THE GATHERING.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marveling boyhood legends store
Of their strange ventures happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his cease-
less course.

10 Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering
sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor,
round.

II.

20 The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;

Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy:
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
30 Her chalice reared of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The gray mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
40 Her notes of peace and rest and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
50 For such Antiquity had taught

Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
60 Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grizzled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
70 The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 't was said, of heathern lore
80 Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er.

The hallowed creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse.
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase called off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
90 While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
His mother watched a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scattered lay the bones of men
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the hand
100 Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The fieldfare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blindworm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,
For heath-bell with her purple bloom
110 Supplied the bonnet and the plume.

All night, in this sad glen, the maid
 Sat shrouded in her mantle's shade:
 She said no shepherd sought her side,
 No hunter's hand her snood untied,
 Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
 The virgin snood did Alice wear;

* * * * * * *
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120 Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
 Or holy church or blessed rite,
 But locked her secret in her breast,
 And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
 Was Brian from his infant years;
 A moody and heart-broken boy,
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,
 Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
 On his mysterious lineage flung.
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
 130 To wood and stream his hap to wail,
 Till, frantic, he as truth received
 What of his birth the crowd believed,
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;
 In vain the learning of the age
 Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 140 Food for the fever of his mind.

Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

150 The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
Till from their foam his dazzled eyes
Beheld the River Demon rise:
The mountain mist took form and limb
Of noontide hag or goblin grim;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swelled with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
160 His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast

170 Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;
The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
All augured ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

180 'T was all prepared;—and from the rock
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide
Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet framed with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;
190 The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross thus formed he held on high,
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke:—

IX.

200 'Woe to the clansman who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
On Alpine's dwelling low!
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
Shall doom him wrath and woe.'
He paused;—the word the vassals took,
210 With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook;
And first in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course,
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his mustered force,
Burst with loud roar their answer hoarse,
'Woe to the traitor, woe!'
Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew,
220 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle screamed afar,—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his muttered spell:
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;

And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
230 But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
'Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
240 Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe.'
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goshawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammered slow;
Answering with imprecation dread,
'Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
250 That e'er shall hide the houseless head
We doom to want and woe!
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the gray pass where birches wave
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his laboring breath he drew,

While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
260 He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head
Who, summoned to his chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobeyed.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
He quenched among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he reared,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
'When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
270 Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!
280 He ceased; no echo gave again
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick with impatient look
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
'Speed, Malise, speed!' he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
'The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!'

Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew:
290 High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in form and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

300 Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
310 The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,

Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
320 But danger, death, and warrior deed
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed!

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down.
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He showed the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamor and surprise behind.
330 The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swath his scythe;
The herds without a keeper strayed,
The plough was in mid-furrow stayed,
The falconer tossed his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
340 So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol from the cloud
Seems for the scene too gayly loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
350 And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayest thou rest, thy labor done,
Their lord shall speed the signal on.—
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way.
What woful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
360 Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
Within the hall, where torch's ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps,*but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.

XVI.

CORONACH.

370 He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.

The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

380 The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

390 Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!

XVII.

400 See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed,
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'T is not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,

But headlong haste or deadly fear
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood;
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!'

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu,—
'Alas!' she sobbed,—'and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!'
420 One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his laboring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
430 And when she marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,

'Kinsman,' she said, 'his race is run
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen,—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.—
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
440 To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead.'
Then weapon-clang and martial call
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe with hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
450 But faded soon that borrowed force;
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;
The tear that gathered in his eye
He left the mountain-breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
460 That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.

Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
He dashed amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
470 He stumbled twice,—the foam splashed high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fallen,—forever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX.

A blithsome rout that morning-tide
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
480 Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
'To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude but glad procession came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear;
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
490 And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,

Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step and bashful hand
She held the kerchief's snowy band.
The gallant bridegroom by her side
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

500 Who meets them at the churchyard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!'
510 And must he change so soon the hand
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
520 Stretch to the race,—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And lingering eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.—
What in the racer's bosom stirred?
530 The sickening pang of hope deferred,
And memory with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honors on his crest,
540 To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve and feeling strong
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;

To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
550 My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
560 His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquered focs,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
570 Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,
Rushing in conflagration strong
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.

The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
580 Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the gray sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequestered glen,
590 Mustered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
Each trained to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath but by his chieftain's hand,
600 No law but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,

In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
610 Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;
All seemed at peace.—Now wot ye why
The Chieftain with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scanned with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequestered dell
620 Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard in Celtic tongue
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin Cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
630 Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,

Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
640 Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs with hideous sway
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
650 In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.
Gray Superstition's whisper dread
Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
660 Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick with a chosen few
Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin Cave they go,
Though the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;
The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,

For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
670 Yet lags the Chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord;
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighboring height,
By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
680 Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief with step reluctant still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
690 To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,

Has yet a harder task to prove,—
 By firm resolve to conquer love!
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
 700 Still hovering near his treasure lost;
 For though his haughty heart deny
 A parting meeting to his eye,
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?
 It is the harp of Allen-bane,
 That wakes its measure slow and high,
 710 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
 What melting voice attends the strings?
 'T is Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!

Thou canst hear though from the wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,

Though banished, outcast, and reviled—

Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;

720 Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share

Shall seem with down of eider piled,

If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
Mother, list a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!
730 Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled:
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!
Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn,—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
740 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page with humble sign
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,
'It is the last time—'t is the last,'
He muttered thrice,—'the last time e'er
That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!'
It was a goading thought,—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
750 And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,

And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered in the vale below
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made:
Some sat, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
760 Were couched to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade
Or lance's point a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
770 Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE PROPHECY.

I.

'THE rose is fairest when 't is budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years!
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

10 Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
'Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
20 By thy keen step and glance I know,
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe.'—
For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.—
'Where sleeps the Chief?' the henchman said.

‘Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I’ll be your guide.’—
Then called a slumberer by his side,
And stirred him with his slackened bow,—
‘Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
30 We seek the Chieftain; on the track
Keep eagle watch till I come back.’

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
‘What of the foeman?’ Norman said.—
‘Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command to march from Doune;
King James the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
40 Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior’s plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?’—
‘What! know ye not that Roderick’s care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
50 Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?’—

IV.

‘T is well advised,—the Chieftain’s plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?
‘It is because last evening-tide
60 Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan’s milk-white bull they slew,’—

MALISE.

‘Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
70 His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kerns in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal ’maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikeman’s goad,
And when we came to Dennan’s Row
A child might scathless stroke his brow.’

V.

NORMAN.

‘That bull was slain; his reeking hide
80 They stretched the cataract beside,

Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's 'Targe.
Couched on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
Midst groan of rock and roar of stream,
90 The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief;—but hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,
His morsel claims with sullen croak?'

MALISE.

100 'Peace! peace! to other than to me
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now
Together they descend the brow.'

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word:—

- 110 'Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
For man endowed with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
'T is hard for such to view, unfurled,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
120 My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
The shapes that sought my fearful couch
A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man— save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fateful answer came
In characters of living flame!
130 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul:—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'

. VII.

'Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood
But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offered to the auspicious blow:

140 A spy has sought my land this morn,—
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till in deep path or dingle brown
He light on those shall bring him down:—
But see, who comes his news to show!
Malise! what tidings of the foe?’

VIII.

150 ‘At Doune, o’er many a spear and glaive
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray’s silver star,
And marked the sable pale of Mar.’
‘By Alpine’s soul, high tidings those!
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?’ ‘To-morrow’s noon
Will see them here for battle boun.’
‘Then shall it see a meeting stern!
But, for the place,—say, couldst thou learn
160 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
Strengthened by them, we well might bide
The battle on Benledi’s side.
Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine’s men
Shall man the Trosachs’ shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine’s gorge we’ll fight,
All in our maids’ and matrons’ sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire,
Lover for maid beloved!—But why—

170 Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
'T is stubborn as his trusty targe.
Each to his post!—all know their charge.'
180 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.—
I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the gray stone
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are poured on her unheeding ear.
'He will return—dear lady, trust!—
190 With joy return;—he will—he must.
Well was it time to seek afar
Some refuge from impending war,
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
Are cowed by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats with many a light,
Floating the livelong yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I marked at morn how close they ride,

200 Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
Like wild ducks couching in the fen
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?'

X.

ELLEN.

'No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
210 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glistened in his eye
Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden when the theme
220 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
O no! 't was apprehensive thought
For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
Let me be just—that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!

Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
230 'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!'
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to lie and make me known?
Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friends' safety with his own;
He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son!

XI.

ALLAN-BANE.

'Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
240 He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,—
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—
My visioned sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,
And think upon the harpings slow
That presaged this approaching woe!
250 Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My harp was wont thy grief to cheer.'

ELLEN.

‘Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear.’
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen’s heart.

260

XII.

BALLAD.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter’s horn is ringing.

‘O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

‘O Alice, ’t was all for thy locks so bright,
And ’t was all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight
Thy brother bold I slew.

270

‘Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

‘And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
280 To keep the cold away.’

‘O Richard! if my brother died,
’T was but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

‘If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we’ll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest-green.

‘And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
290 And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.’

XIII.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

’T is merry, ’t is merry, in good greenwood;
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech’s pride, and oak’s brown side,
Lord Richard’s axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who woned within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
300 His voice was ghostly shrill.

'Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?

310

'Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.

'Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.'

XIV.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have stilled their singing;
'The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

320

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
'I fear not sign,' quoth the grisly elf,
'That is made with bloody hands.'

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
‘That woman void of fear,—
‘And if there’s blood upon his hand,
‘T is but the blood of deer.’

‘Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
330 The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.’

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign,—
‘And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

‘And I conjure thee, demon elf,
By Him whom demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?’

XV.

BALLAD CONTINUED.

340 “T is merry, ’t is merry, in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

‘And gayly shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

‘And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
350 Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

‘It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And ’twixt life and death was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

‘But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
360 As fair a form as thine.’

She crossed him once—she crossed him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fariest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the Mavis and Merle were singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade;
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
'T is Snowdoun's Knight, 't is James Fitz-James.

Ellen beheld as in a dream,

380 Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream:

'O stranger! in such hour of fear

What evil hap has brought thee here?'

'An evil hap how can it be

That bids me look again on thee?

By promise bound, my former guide

Met me betimes this morning-tide,

And marshalled over bank and bourne

The happy path of my return.'

'The happy path!—what! said he naught

390 Of war, of battle to be fought,

Of guarded pass?' 'No, by my faith!

Nor saw I aught could augur scathe.'

'O haste thee, Allan, to the kern:

Yonder his tartans I discern;

Learn thou his purpose, and conjure

That he will guide the stranger sure!—

What prompted thee, unhappy man?

The meanest serf in Roderick's clan

Had not been bribed, by love or fear,

400 Unknown to him to guide thee here.'

XVII.

'Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath
When love or honor's weighed with death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled,
By this soft hand to lead thee far
410 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower'—
'O hush, Sir Knight! 't were female art,
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
420 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track:
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on!—
One way remains—I'll tell him all—
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first—my father is a man
Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
430 With me 't were infamy to wed.
Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the truth!

Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—
If yet he is!—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.
440 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Through mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony,
As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
450 He proffered to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.
'O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn
If thou mayst trust yon wily kern.'
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
460 He paused, and turned, and came again.

XIX.

‘Hear, lady, yet a parting word!—
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland’s lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
470 Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the King without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way:
And claim thy suit, whate’er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me.’
480 He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosach’s glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:

490 Sudden his guide whooped loud and high—
‘Murdoch! was that a signal cry?’—
He stammered forth, ‘I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.’
He looked—he knew the raven’s prey,
His own brave steed: ‘Ah! gallant gray!
For thee—for me, perchance—’t were well
We ne’er had seen the Trosachs’ dell.—
Murdock, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!’
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a preeipice’s edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
510 Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shrieked till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laughed when near they drew.

520 For then the Lowland garb she knew;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung—
She sung!—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strained and roughened, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

SONG.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warped and wrung—
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
530 I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'T was thus my hair they bade me braid,
They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile
540 That drowned in blood the morning smile!
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII.

'Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle gray,

As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.'
'T is Blanche of Devan,' Murdock said,
'A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
550 Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
Hence, brain-sick fool!'—He raised his bow:—
'Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As e'er peasant pitched a bar!'
560 'Thanks, champion, thanks!' the Maniac cried,
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
'See the gray pennons I prepare,
To seek my true love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,
570 Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry.'

XXIV.

'Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!
'O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;

And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

‘For O my sweet William was forester true,

He stole poor Blanche’s heart away!

580 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,

And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

‘It was not that I meant to tell . . .

But thou art wise and guessest well.’

Then, in a low and broken tone,

And hurried note, the song went on.

Still on the Clansman fearfully

She fixed her apprehensive eye,

Then turned it on the Knight, and then

Her look glanced wildly o’er the glen.

XXV.

590 ‘The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,—

Ever sing merrily, merrily;

The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,

Hunters live so cheerily.

‘It was a stag, a stag of ten,

Bearing its branches sturdily;

He came stately down the glen,—

Ever sing hardily, hardily.

‘It was there he met with a wounded doe,

She was bleeding deathfully;

600 She warned him of the toils below,

O, so faithfully, faithfully!

'He had an eye, and he could heed,—
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed,—
Hunters watch so narrowly.'

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdock's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.
610 Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
'Disclose thy treachery, or die!'
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.—
Murdock of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need;
620 With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life;
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couched upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!—
Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
630 As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain

Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fallen with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die,
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
640 And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
'Stranger, it is in vain!' she cried.
'This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
650 And something tells me in thine eye
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seest thou this tress?—O, still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when 't was shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head,—
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
660 Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,

And thou wilt bring it me again.
I waver still.—O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light!—
O, by thy knighthood's honored sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
670 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell.'

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast poured his eyes at pity's elaims;
And now, with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murdered maid expire.
'God, in my need, be my relief,
680 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!
A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
'By Him whose word is truth, I swear,
No other favor will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!—
But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
690 The chase is up,—but they shall know,
The stag at bay's a dangerous foe.'

Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
700 'Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Whe e'er so mad but might have guessed
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
710 I'll couch me here till evening gray,
Then darkling try my dangerous way.'

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
720 With cautious step and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;

And not the summer solstice there
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
730 A watch-fire close before him burned.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
'Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!'—
'A stranger.' 'What dost thou require?'
'Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.'
'Art thou a friend to Roderick?' 'No.'
740 'Thou dar'st not call thyself a foc?'
'I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand.'
'Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,
750 Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!'—
'They do, by heaven!—come Roderick Dhu,

And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest.'
'If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight.'
'Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe.'
'Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare.'

760

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed:—
'Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honor spoke
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more,— upon thy fate, 't is said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honor's laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,

770

780

In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.'
790 'I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 't is nobly given!
'Well, rest thee; for the bitten's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby.'
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COMBAT.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
 When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
 It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
 And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
 And lights the fearful path on mountain-side,—
 Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
 Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
 Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
 Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of
 War.

II.

10 That early beam, so fair and sheen,
 Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
 When, rousing at its glimmer red,
 The warriors left their lowly bed,
 Looked out upon the dappled sky,
 Muttered their soldier matins by,
 And then awaked their fire, to steal,
 As short and rude, their soldier meal.
 That o'er, the Gael around him threw
 His graceful plaid of varied hue,
 20 And, true to promise, led the way,
 By thicket green and mountain gray.
 A wildering path!—they winded now

Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
30 'T was oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
40 Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
50 But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,

Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
60 He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

'Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,' the Saxon said,
'I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
70 Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep perchance the villain lied.'
'Yet why a second venture try?'
'A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
Moves our free course by such fixed cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
80 Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—

A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid;
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone.'

V.

'Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?'
90 'No, by my word;—of bands prepared
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I sought, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.'
'Free be they flung! for we were loath
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
100 But, stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewildered in the mountain-game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?'
'Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlawed desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
110 Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart.'

VI.

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
'And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What recked the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
120 He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven.'
'Still was it outrage;—yet, 't is true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany with feeble hand
Held borrowed truncheon of command,
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
130 Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain,—
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne.'

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile:
'Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,

Extended in succession gay,
140 Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household bread,
150 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
“To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.”
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
160 Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While of ten thousand herds there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'

VIII.

- 170 Answered Fitz-James: 'And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?'
'As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
- 180 Nor yet for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.'
'Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
- 190 I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!

IX.

'Have then thy wish!'—He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;

Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
200 Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
210 That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
220 With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glanee of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James: 'How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!'

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
230 He manned himself with dauntless air,
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.'
Sir Roderick marked,—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foeman worthy of their steel.
240 Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair,—
250 The next but swept a lone hill-side,—
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone.

XI.

Fitz-James looked round,—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;

Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
260 Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied:
'Fear naught—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
270 So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.'
They moved;—I said Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive,
Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
280 Which yet by fearful proof was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.

290 Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
300 Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
'Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
310 This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand,
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.'

XIII.

The Saxon paused: 'I ne'er delayed,
320 When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved.
A better meed have well deserved:
Can naught but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?'—'No, stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
330 Between the living and the dead:
"Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife." '
'Then, by my word,' the Saxon said,
'The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdock, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go,
340 When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV.

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye:
'Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
350 Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate;—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valor light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair.'
360 'I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
370 Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.'
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each looked to sun and stream and plain
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot and point and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

380 Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
390 Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showed his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock or castle-roof
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
400 Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

'Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!'
'Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.'
Like adder darting from his coil,

Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
410 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
420 His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game:
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
430 Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhoped, from desperate strife;

Next on his foe his look he cast,
440 Whose every gasp appeared his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,—
'Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valor give.'
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
450 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead
By loosened rein a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,—
With wonder viewed the bloody spot,—
'Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
460 And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be bouned
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

- 470 'Stand, Bayard, stand!'—the steed obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
- 480 Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sat erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonic's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merry-men followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
- 490 Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,

500 And on the opposing shore take ground,
With splash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—
510 'Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray,
Who townward holds the rocky way, -
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain-side?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?'
'No, by my word;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace—'
'Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
520 And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'T is James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:

530 The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared.
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:—
'Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
540 The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent!—but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.—
Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
550 A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?

And see! upon the crowded street,
560 In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
570 I'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize;—King James shall mark
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft in happier days
His boyish wonder loved to praise.'

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
580 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain,—
He chose the fairest of the train.

Gravely he greets each city sire,
590 Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,—
'Long live the Commons' King, King James!'
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
600 Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
'There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
610 Their checkered bands the joyous rout.
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;

620 Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centered in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archers' stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy,—
630 No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,—
Nor called in vain, for Douglas came.—
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
640 Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.

When each his utmost strength had shown,
650 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The gray-haired sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
660 The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now with anxious wonder scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong.
670 The old men marked and shook the head.
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw

His strength surpassing Nature's law.
680 Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and in the field
Found safety underneath his shield;
690 For he whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
700 The fleetest hound in all the North,—
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound

In anger struck the noble hound.
710 The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen's image came.
720 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamored loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain,
730 But stern the Baron's warning: 'Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.—'

‘Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!’ the Monarch said:
740 ‘Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know;
But shall a Monarch’s presence brook
Injurious blow and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!’—for tumult rose,
And yeomen ’gan to bend their bows,—
750 ‘Break off the sports!’ he said and frowned,
‘And bid our horsemen clear the ground.’

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
760 At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law.

And to the leading soldier said:
'Sir Jolin of Hyndford, 't was my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
770 For that good deed permit me then
A word with these misguided men.—

XXVIII.

'Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honor, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
780 My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind
Which knit my country and my kind?
O no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread
For me in kindred gore are red:
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me that mother wails her son,
790 For me that widow's mate expires,
For me that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head
800 Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men upon the verge of life
Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
810 With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honored charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
'O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
820 Hear'st thou,' he said, 'the loud acclaim
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;

With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
830 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king?—

XXXI.

'But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of Mar?'
840 'He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground;
For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'T is said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
To break their muster marched, and soon
850 Your Grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride.'

XXXII.

“Thou warn’st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day.—
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
860 Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom’s laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief’s crimes, avenging steel.
870 Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!’
He turned his steed,—‘My liege, I hie,
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.’
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James’s mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
880 Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.

The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms;—the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold,
'Where stout Earl William was of old.'—
And there his word the speaker stayed,
And finger on his lip he laid,
890 Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen from the west
At evening to the Castle pressed,
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.



CANTO SIXTH.

THE GUARD-ROOM

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.
10 What various scenes, and O, what scenes of woe,
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble
wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
20 With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums with rolling note foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.

Through narrow loop and casement barred,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
30 Faces deformed with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labored still their thirst to quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
40 O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
50 The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air;

The Fleming there despised the soil
That paid so ill the laborer's toil;
Their rolls showed French and German name;
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
60 The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and mid their words
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
70 Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard,—
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
80 In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew

When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved that day their games cut short,
And marred the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, 'Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear.'

V.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

90 Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
100 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge, heard without,
Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.
110 A soldier to the portal went,—
'Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And—beat for jubilee the drum!—
A maid and minstrel with him come.'
Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,
A harper with him, and, in plaid
All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
120 'What news?' they roared:—'I only know,
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untamable
As the rude mountains where they dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast.'—
'But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
130 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band.'

VII.

'No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,

Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed,
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.'—
140 'Hear ye his boast?' cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
'Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee.'
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
150 Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between.
And dropped at once the tartan screen:—
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke: 'Soldiers, attend!
160 My father was the soldier's friend,
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant or the strong
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong.'
Answered De Brent, most forward still

In every feat or good or ill:
‘I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw’s child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
170 And merry Needwood knows the cause.
Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
‘Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—
Hear ye, my mates! I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o’er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
180 Beware loose speech, or jesting rough;
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.’

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—
Of Tullibardine’s house he sprung,—
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humor light,
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
190 And dauntless eye:—and yet, in sooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen’s lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.

‘Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion’s aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
200 Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?’
Her dark eye flashed;—she paused and sighed:—
‘O what have I to do with pride!—
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father’s life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.’

X.

210 The signet-ring young Lewis took
With deep respect and altered look,
And said: ‘This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veiled.
Lady, in aught my folly failed.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you meanwhile in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
220 Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.’
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared

Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took,
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
230 Forced bluntly back the proffered gold:—
'Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar.'
With thanks—'t was all she could—the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
240 Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
'My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel I,—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
250 Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
'Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse—

A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right,—deny it not!
260 'Little we reckon,' said John of Brent,
'We Southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer
More than to guide the laboring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.'

XII.

270 Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they passed, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan and fetters' din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint and crushing limb,
280 By artists formed who deemed it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.

They entered:—’t was a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
290 And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,
Such as the rugged days of old
Deemed fit for captive noble’s hold.
‘Here,’ said De Brent, ‘thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well.’
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock’s murmurs growled anew.
300 Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
310 So on his couch lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fevered limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—

O, how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,—
‘What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
320 My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
Have they been ruined in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear.’—
For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.—
‘Who fought?—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
Some might,—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?’
330 ‘O, calm thee, Chief!’ the Minstrel cried,
‘Ellen is safe!’ ‘For that thank Heaven!’
‘And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent.’

XIV.

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever’s fire was in his eye;
340 But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Checked his swarthy brow and cheeks.
‘Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle,—again where ne’er
Shall harper play or warrior hear!—

That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
Strike it!—and then,—for well thou canst,—
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
350 Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray.'
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed,—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
360 But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along;—
As shallop launched on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.

'The Minstrel came once more to view
370 The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For ere he parted he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land,

So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—

There is no breeze upon the fern,

No ripple on the lake,

Upon her eyry nods the crne,

The deer has sought the brake;

The small birds will not sing aloud,

380 The springing trout lies still,

So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,

That swathes, as with a purple shroud,

Benledi's distant hill.

Is it the thunder's solemn sound

That mutters deep and dread,

Or echoes from the groaning ground

The warrior's measured tread?

Is it the lightning's quivering glance

That on the thicket streams,

390 Or do they flash on spear and lance

The sun's retiring beams?—

I see the dagger-crest of Mar,

I see the Moray's silver star,

Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,

That up the lake comes winding far!

To hero boune for battle-strife,

Or bard of martial lay,

'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,

One glance at their array!

XVI.

400 'There light-armed archers far and near

Surveyed the tangled ground,

Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,

A twilight forest frowned,

Their barded horsemen in the rear
The stern battalia crowned.
No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
410 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing.
Save when they stirred the roc;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
420 High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the 'Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

'At once there rose so wild a yell

Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
430 Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,

The archery appear:

For life! for life! their flight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.

440 Onward they drive in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?—
"Down, down," cried Mar, "your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!"—
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
450 The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
"We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame."

XVIII.

'Bearing before them in their course
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
460 Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,

When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
470 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,—
"My banner-man, advance!
I see," he cried, "their column shake.
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!"—
The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
480 Where, where was Roderick then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was poured;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanished the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
490 Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.

'Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within.—
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
500 Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue

To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.

I heeded not the eddying surge,
510 Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.

Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;

520 The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,

While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.

At weary bay each shattered band,
Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
530 Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

'Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
 And cried: "Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'T is there of yore the robber band
 Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
540 To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,
 He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed,—the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Benvenue
 A mingled echo gave;
550 The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'T was then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven;

A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
560 The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain.—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—
It darkened,—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
570 Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

' "Revenge! revenge!" the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
580 Sprung from his horse, and from a crag
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar

A herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold
Were both, he said, in captive hold.'—
But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
590 Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
600 Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless and moanless, drew
His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu!—
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

LAMENT.

'And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
610 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!
For thee shall none a requiem say?—
For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,

For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honored Pine!

620 'What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
O, woe for Alpine's honored Pine!

'Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
630 Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honored Pine.'

XXIII.

Ellen the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-colored gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
640 In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall,

And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she looked, 't was but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
650 The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.
Those who such simple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head,
660 The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour?
'T was from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.

'My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.

I wish I were as I have been,
670 Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.

'I hate to learn the ebb of time
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
680 These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.

'No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
That life is lost to love and me!'

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
690 The listener had not turned her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdown's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
'O welcome, brave Fitz-James!' she said;

'How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt—' 'O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
700 Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 't is more than time,
He holds his court at morning prime.'
With beating heart, and besom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
710 Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whispered hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half stayed,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till at his touch its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 't was brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
720 Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;

For him she sought who owned this state,
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate!—
She gazed on many a princely port
730 Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,—
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare; and in the room
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,—
740 And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King!

XXVII.

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She showed the ring,—she clasped her hands.
O, not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
750 Checked with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
And bade her terrors be dismissed:—
'Yes, fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.

Ask naught for Douglas;—yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven;
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
760 I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamor loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our throne.—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
770 What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.'

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
780 On nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepped between—'Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 't is my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,

'T is under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils,—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,
790 And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause.'
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
'Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
800 Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!
Aloud he spoke: 'Thou still dost hold
That little talsman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring,—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?'

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guessed
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But with that consciousness there came
A lightening of her fears for Grame,
And more she deemed the Monarch's ire
810 Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
'Forbear thy suit;—the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,

Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand;—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
820 Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?
Blushing, she turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wished her sire to speak
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
'Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.
Malcolm, come forth!'—and, at the word,
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
830 'For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonoring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
840 Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,

And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
850 And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!

Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.

Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.—
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

860 Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'T is now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'T is now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell;
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now, 't is silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

NOTES

NOTES AND SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

CANTO FIRST. THE CHASE.

The scene of the poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of action includes six days, each canto occupying a day.

1. **Harp of the North.** The spirit of old Scotch minstrelsy. The poem begins with three introductory verses in Spencerian stanza, (which are groups of five-foot lines concluded by a line of six feet), invoking the spirit of Scotch minstrelsy to awaken and inspire the author. Each canto has an introduction in this style, usually a description of the dawn.

2. **Witch elm.**—Properly wych elm, a variety of elm native to Scotland; it has no connection with the word witch.

2. **St. Fillan's spring.**—St. Fillan was an abbot of the seventh century. There were two springs sacred to him, each possessing great curative powers.

3. **Numbers.**—Music, poetry.

10. **Caledon.**—Caledonia was the ancient name of Scotland.

29. **Monan's rill.**—St. Monan was a martyr of the fourth century. This rill cannot be located. Note the fine romantic opening of the poem. Stevenson cites it in his "A Gossip on Romance" as "A direct romantic opening, one of the most spirited and poetical in literature."

32. **Beacon red.**—An allusion to the signal fires kindled on hill-tops to give warning of intended raids.

33. **Benvoirlich.**—A mountain a short distance to the northwest of Loch Lubnaig. The Gaelic word Ben, meaning mountain, is commonly used in the Highlands.

40. **Antlered monarch.**—Note the fine figure.

45. **Beamed frontlet.**—Antlered forehead, in keeping with line 40.

47. Why tainted?

53. **Uam Var.**—"Pronounced Ua Var, or more properly Uaigh^h Mor, is a mountain . . . in Mentieth, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant."—SCOTT.

58. Note the size of the hunt. From the number of dogs what do you infer as to the rank of the hunters?

71. **Linn.**—A deep pool, sometimes a cataract.

77. **Giant made his den.**—See 53 above.

79. **High in his pathway.**—Note the passage of time. When had the hunt begun?

84. **Shrewdly.**—Severely; now obsolete in this sense.

86. The first pause in the breathless haste of the hunt. Get the stag's outlook from the map and see that the "copsewood gray, that waved and wept on Loch Achray" is his logical refuge.

91. **Moss.**—Here used for a boggy, peaty expanse.

112. **Brigg of Turk.**—Still in existence, on the stream connecting Loch Vennachar and Loch Achray. Brigg is the Scotch for bridge.

114. Again note the passage of time. Is it a long hunt covering much ground?

120. **St. Hubert's breed.**—St. Hubert was the patron saint of hunters and the finest breed of hunting dogs was named in his honor.

127. **Quarry.**—The hunted game; a technical use of the word.

129. **Brake.**—A thicket.

138. **Whinyard.**—A short sword or hunting knife.

145. **Troschs.**—Spelled correctly with two 's's' (Miss Rat-tray). Most editors use one 's'. "The rough or bristled territory." Its dense woods afford an excellent shelter for game, as in the "copsewood gray," referred to in line 94. At the time that Scott wrote there was no road through the glen, but now tourist coaches regularly drive through it. Automobiles are forbidden.

163. **The banks of Seine.**—Paris is on the River Seine in France. What hint does this give us about the huntsman? Note other references to his foreign education.

166. **Woe worth the chase.**—Woe be to the chase. Worth is from the Anglo-Saxon 'weorthan', to become.

184-253. These lines mark a digression, in which a wonderful picture is given of the romantic scenery. It is viewed in the light of the setting sun and prepares the reader for the vision of Loch Katrine, soon to burst on him, "One burnished sheet of living gold."

197. **Shinar's plain.**—See Genesis XI, 1-9.

202. **Pagod.**—Pagoda. A sacred tower of the East shaped like a pyramid.

215. **Hawthorn.**—The blossom of the hawthorn tree may be either white or pink. It is much used for decorative purposes in England at May-day celebrations. In late autumn the tree is beautiful, with rich crimson berries.

212-218. Note the diversity of vegetation in the glade and on the mountain side. These lines give an excellent description of a Scottish hillside. The flowers and trees are mentioned in the order in which one would find them in ascending the hill.

258. **Broom's tough roots.**—The broom plant grows wild all over Scotland. It is in full bloom in the month of June, and makes a splendid splash of gold on hill sides and waste lands. The stems are long and flexible, and the bushes grow to a height of four or five feet.

293. **Matins.**—The morning service of the Roman Catholic Church. Note other references to his religion.

297. **Bead.**—From his rosary. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'biddan', to pray.

302. **Beshrew.**—An imprecation meaning 'may evil befall.'

313. **Highland plunderers.**—Note the suggestion of danger and see the "Introduction."

318. **Falchion.**—Make a list of the words for sword used in the poem.

323. Is the introduction of the heroine romantic?

342. **Naiad.**—A water goddess. Why particularly appropriate? Nymph is a term for a spirit either of the woods or water, and the Graces were the daughters of Jove and presided over pleasures.

356. **Harebell.**—The wild blue-bell of Scotland, which gives its name to a popular melody, "The Blue Bells of Scotland." The stem is very slight and the plant is quite distinct from the wild hyacinth, which is the blue-bell of England.

359. **Accents of the mountain tongue.**—In the Highlands Gaelic is still spoken; in recent years attempts have been made to revive it in Highland schools.

365. **Snood.**—The band which confined a Highland maiden's hair; it was a mark of maidenhood. As soon as a woman married, she doffed the snood and donned the "mutch", a close-fitting bonnet, also called "coif." See Canto III, 485.

370. **Plaid.**—Pronounced played. The big, square shawl or blanket worn by men and women in the Highlands, and woven into the tartan or pattern characteristic of the clan. Note the rich materials of plaid, snood and brooch. What do they indicate?

384. **The indignant spirit of the North.**—The Highlanders were noted for their pride and independence. They were proverbially quick-tempered.

409—480. Note the first description of the huntsman. What impression is given?

425. **Petty need.**—Food and shelter.

438. **Couch was pulled.**—The beds were made from the mountain heather, as in our mountains they are made of dried ferns or hemlock.

440. **Ptarmigan.**—A kind of grouse.

443. **Rood.**—The cross. Holyrood, the Royal Palace in Edinburgh, was, literally, the Palace of the Holy Cross.

460. **Visioned future.**—The Scotch Highlanders believed implicitly in the gift of 'second-sight' for telling the future. When visited by the second-sight, the seer was in a trance. What are other instances of Highland superstition in the poem?

464. **Lincoln green.**—Hunters in the Middle Ages wore suits of a green cloth originally made in Lincolnshire, England.

477. **Doomed.**—Destined.

483. **Toil unwonted.**—What does this suggest as to the hunter's position? Note also Ellen's sly humor.

504. **For retreat in dangerous hour.**—It was customary for Highland chieftains to have some such secret place of refuge.

519. **Russet canopy.**—Rushes, or reeds, when they wither have a reddish tint.

525. **Idaeon vine.**—The red whortleberry, known in Scotland as the blueberry.

537. He fears an ambushade. Why? Look back to line 313.

573. **Ferragus or Ascabart.**—Giants famous in fable for size and strength.

584. **Hospitality.**—The Highlanders were famed for hospitality. It was against their custom to turn away a stranger, be he friend or foe, until he had been furnished food, rest and shelter. Note the observance of the law throughout the poem.

596. **God wot.**—God knows. From the Anglo-Saxon 'wit', to know. Now obsolete.

598. **Lord Moray's train.**—A Lowland noble and a close friend of the king.

616. **Weird women we.**—Ellen, in light, sportive mood, claims that she and her aunt are witches, with power to cast spells, or to ride on the wind, like the witches of Macbeth. Where has Ellen shown her sense of humor before?

624-665. Song. Note how successfully Scott breaks the monotony of the iambic tetrameter, or four accent verse, by the songs introduced at intervals throughout the poem. A talking machine company has a record of this song. The music adds greatly to the dramatic effect of the song.

638. **Pibroch.**—Here the bagpipe, but usually the air played on the bagpipe. See Canto II, 356.

657. **Reveill .**—A French word, pronounced ra-vay-ya: the morning bugle call for soldiers and huntsmen. Its ordinary English pronunciation is rev-el-e.

672-717. Note the hints of the huntsman's past, woven with the adventures of the day into his dreams. Lines 678-679 are prophetic of his defeat by the English at Solway Moss, though this event does not come within the scope of the present poem.

729. **That exiled race.**—The Douglas family. See "Introduc-

tion." There were two branches of the house, known as the 'Black Douglasses' and 'Red Douglasses.' The former were overthrown by James II.; the latter by James V., the king of the poem.

740. **Orisons he told.**—Told comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'telan', to count. He counts his beads, or prays with his rosary in hand. A golden rosary hints at high rank

CANTO TWO. THE ISLAND.

1. **Black-cock.**—Grouse.

7. **Minstrel gray.** Most Highland families had among their attendants a minstrel, whose office was usually hereditary.

28. **Southern sky.**—South from the Highlands, that is the Lowlands.

29. **Plaided stranger.**—A Highlander wearing his plaid.

66. **Rocks with lichens wild.**—Rock is used in Scotland for a large mass only.

87-89. **Festal day.**—He alludes to prizes given in tournaments.

98. **Thy Malcolm.**—When has Ellen mentioned his name before?

101. The stranger speaks in Lowland Scotch.

109. **Graeme.**—Usually spelled Graham, an ancient family holding large possessions in Strath Endrick at the lower end of Loch Lomond, and also near Stirling.

112. **Hall and bower.**—Hall, the gathering place of the men, and bower, usually the apartments of the women: hence, among lords and ladies.

114. **Three times.**—The number three, like seven, was supposed to have a special value in rites and spells.

131. **St. Modan.**—A Scotch abbot of the seventh century.

141. **Bothwell's bannered hall.**—Bothwell Castle was an ancient seat of the Douglasses on the Clyde near Glasgow. It is now one of the most picturesque ruins in Scotlands.

142. **Ere Douglasses to ruin driven.**—See Canto I, 729.

146. **Weal.**—Happiness.

159. **Tweed to Spey.**—The Spey is in the Highlands; the Tweed on the English border. In other words Allan knows all the airs of Scotland.

169. **Give the wind.**—Yield to it.

200. **Lady of the Bleeding Heart.**—Sir James Douglas, the friend of King Robert Bruce, winner of Scotch independence, undertook to carry the heart of his royal master on a crusade to the Holy Land. Douglas was killed while fighting the Moors in Spain, but the casket containing the heart of Bruce was brought back to Scotland and buried in Melrose Abbey. After this incident the Douglas family added a bleeding heart to its coat of arms. See Ticknor's poem, "Loyal."

206. **Strathspey.**—A quick Highland dance accompanied by bagpipes. It takes its name from the "strath" or valley of the Spey, and is in sharp contrast to the slow courtly dance mentioned in the line above.

212-214. Note the epithets applied to Sir Roderick, the leader of Clan Alpine (pronounced Alpin). What does each mean?

216. **Lennox foray.**—A marauding excursion into the district of Lennox in the Lowlands.

218-245. What view is given here of Roderick's character?

221. **Holy-Rood.**—This palace at the foot of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh was built in part by David I. in the twelfth century, but was entirely remodelled by James V. It was the chief residence of the Scottish kings, and is especially famous in connection with Mary, Queen of Scots. Violence in the presence of the monarch was regarded as an insult to majesty. For such an offence Roderick Dhu had been outlawed.

236-237. As they were both Catholics, Roderick would have to obtain a dispensation, or special permission, from the Pope, in order to wed Ellen, who was his cousin. The marriage of first cousins is forbidden by the Roman Catholic church.

260. **Votaress in Maronnan's cell.**—A chapel at the eastern end of Loch Lomond. Votaress here means nun, one consecrated by a vow.

269-290. Study carefully the delineation of Roderick's character and test it by his actions later in the story.

270. **Bracklinn's thundering wave.**—A cascade fifty feet in height, near Callender.

274. **Claymore.**—A large, double-bladed sword used by Highlanders. It was for centuries their characteristic weapon.

294. **Sable plume.**—All chieftains wore some kind of feather in their bonnets.

306. **Tine-man.**—The word comes from the Scotch 'tiner,' to lose. The fourth Earl of Douglas was called 'Tineman' because of his ill-fortune in war. The Douglasses were traditional enemies of the Percies, who lived just over the English side of the border. The famous Battle of Otterburn was fought between these border rivals, as well as many other engagements. Archibald Douglas, 'Tineman,' entered into a league with Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and fought with him against Henry IV. of England at Shrewsbury, where the confederates were beaten.

309. See Canto I, 536-543. There were many superstitions concerning magic swords.

319. **Beltane game.**—A May-day festival, celebrated according to ancient Gaelic custom by kindling fires on the hill-tops and by dancing and games. Beltane was supposed to mean Beal-tine, or fire of Beal, the sun, but the derivation of the word is now regarded as uncertain.

327. **Canna's hoary beard.**—The canna is a small reed-like plant growing in marshy places. When ripe it has a downy, cotton-like tuft surrounding the seeds.

330. **Pibroch.**—Here the music of the bagpipes. See Canto I, 638. Each clan had its distinctive tune, which was played to summon the members to battle, or, as here, when the clan was returning victorious.

335. **Glengyle.**—At the upper end of Loch Katrine.

340. **Bannered Pine.**—Clan Alpine's emblem.

343. **Tartans brave.**—Brave, meaning fine. Tartans here refer to the clansmen's kilts, which would be of woolen cloth showing the Mac Alpine tartan. Tartan is usually an adjective; as blue, black, or any other color; it simply means a checked pattern, and each clan has its own peculiar check or design, according to which its plaid is woven.

344. **Plumage.**—The feathers in the Highland bonnets.

349-351. **Gaudy streamers.**—Gay ribbons with which the pipes are decorated. The chanter is that pipe of the bagpipes, with finger-holes, on which the melody is played.

396. **Roderick Vich Alpine.**—Vich means 'son of', hence Roderick, the descendant of Alpine, the founder of the Clan MacAlpine.

399. **Boat song.** A talking machine company has a record giving this song, with the pibroch as the prelude; and on the reverse side Ellen's song, 'Ave Maria,' with a harp accompaniment. These records help much in creating the atmosphere of the poem.

405. **Bourgeon.**—Usually burgeon; to sprout.

416. **Menteith and Breadalbane.**—Menteith is the region to the south of Loch Lomond, watered by the River Teith, and Breadalbane, the country to the north. The other points mentioned in the song are along the east shore of Loch Lomond and outside of Roderick's territory.

420. **Slogan.**—The war cry of the clan. The slogan of Roderick's clan was "Remember the death of Alpine," the founder.

423. **Saxon maid.**—The Lowlanders were so-called by the Highlanders because of their Anglo-Saxon descent. See "The Introduction."

431. **Rosebud that graces yon island.**—To whom does this refer? What is the figure used?

476. **Weeped.**—Used to make a rhyme.

489-501. Note the references to the early career of the banished nobleman.

504. **Waned crescent.**—The emblem of the Scott family.

506. **Blantyre.**—A priory opposite Bothwell Castle.

534-563. Compare this new and apparently favored suitor with Roderick Dhu and James Fitz-James. What are Malcolm's accomplishments?

536. **Tartan hose.**—Stockings reaching to the knee knit in the Graeme tartan.

541. **Ptarmigan in snow.**—The ptarmigan, like some other animals, changes its color with the seasons. When the hills are

covered with snow, its brown feathers turn to white and the bird is difficult to see.

548. **Ben Lomond.**—One of the most noted Scotch mountains, 3192 feet high.

574. **Glenfinlas.**—Why had the hunter come so far? For whom do you suppose they “scoured the ground?”

577. **Royal ward.**—When the heir to an estate was a minor, the king managed the property and drew part of the revenue. The heir was under the king’s direct protection.

616. **Tamed the Border-side.**—Two districts in Scotland were centers of lawlessness—the Highlands and the border. In each the people felt little loyalty to the king, but were devoted to their chieftains. In 1529, James V. made an expedition to the English border with a large force, apparently equipped for hunting, and treacherously put a number of border chiefs to death. See the Introduction.

623-626. All the streams referred to are on the border. The Yarrow district, “Yarrowbraes,” has been made famous by Wordsworth’s poems.

628. **Sheep-walk.**—The border hills, unlike those of the Highlands, are gentle and clothed with grass and other vegetation, affording a good pasture for sheep. The Tweed valley is the center of the Scotch woolen industry.

629. **This tyrant.**—James V. was in most respects a good king, but Roderick could not forgive his slaughter of the border chieftains.

634. **Fate of Border chivalry.**—Roderick fears that fate for himself.

665-670. What good side of Roderick’s character is here revealed?

674. **Enow.**—Enough.

678. **The Links of Forth.**—The windings of the Forth beyond Stirling.

692-708. Does this long simile help you to understand Ellen’s dismay?

741. **Waving of his tartans.**—The swing of his kilt as he walked.

757. **Chequered shroud.**—The plaid of the clan tartan, folded across his breast.

802. **Should feel the midnight air.**—This was especially insulting because physical endurance was a highly-prized virtue among the Highlanders.

803. **James Stuart.**—The king, James V., whose ward Malcolm is. Roderick shows his lack of allegiance by refusing him the royal title.

804. **Fell.**—A precipice.

809. **Henchman.**—The personal attendant, or gillie, of a Highland chief. The word was formerly believed to be derived from 'haunch', meaning one who stands beside his master at meat. It probably comes, however, from the Old English henchman, a horseman, groom, or personal attendant.

831. **Fiery Cross.**—The Highland signal of war. See Canto III.

839. **Dirk.**—A short Highland dagger worn inside the stocking, with the hilt projecting an inch or two at the knee.

844. **Pattern of old fidelity.**—Why is this an excellent description of the minstrel?

855. **Yon pride-swollen robber.**—To whom does Malcolm allude? Is this a good description?

857-860. Malcolm's pride has been stung by Roderick's taunts. The distance is given as a bowshot, that is a very long swim. What are the main points in Malcolm's character?

CANTO THREE. THE GATHERING.

12. **Dingle.**—A deep, wooded dell or hollow between cliffs.

18. **Fiery Cross.** Scott says: "When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden emergency, he slew a goat, and, making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross, also Crean Tarigh, or the Cross of Shame, because disobedience to what the signal implied, inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to

the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal dispatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbors, if the danger was common to them. At the sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emphatically announced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon the warlike signal." Thomas Dixon states, in his novels, that the Fiery Cross was used in the South during the Reconstruction to summon the Ku Klux Klan.

19-40. Sunrise on Loch Katrine. A good memory selection.

36. **Lark sent down her revelry.**—The skylark, the sweetest singer of Scottish birds, is much smaller than the American lark. Its song is at the best near the end of May.

39. **Cushat Dove.**—The ring-dove.

41-60. Contrast Roderick's mood with the peace of the lake. Is the crisis a serious one?

55. **Mountain Eagle.**—Now almost extinct in Scotland.

62. **Rowan.**—The mountain ash. It often grows in very inaccessible places on mountain sides.

74. **Benharrow.**—A mountain near Loch Lomond.

76. **Druid's.**—The priests of the ancient pagan religion of Britain. They held the mistletoe sacred and offered sacrifices under the oaks where it grew.

84. **Pilgrim.**—It was the custom in the Middle Ages for pious pilgrims to visit shrines of saints or the abodes of religious hermits.

91-178. Note how the parentage, training and life of Brian all tend to make him a suitable character to preside over the half-Christian, half-heathen ceremonies that follow.

104. **Fieldfare.**—A species of thrush.

109. **Heathbell.**—This plant is not the same as the heather. It flowers earlier, in July—whereas real heather is not in bloom until

August—and it is different in color, being pinker than the heather and less purple. It grows lower than the heather and its flowers are shaped like bells—hence the name.

142. **Cabala.**—Usually spelled Cabbala. Mystical teachings: spells.

154-156. **River demon.**—Scott says: “The River Demon, or River-Horse, for it is that form that he commonly assumes, is the Kelpy of the Lowlands, an evil or malicious spirit, delighting to forbode and to witness calamity. He frequents most Highland lakes and rivers. . . The ‘noon tide hag’. . . a tall, emaciated, gigantic female figure, is supposed in particular, to haunt the district of Knoidart.”

160. **Beheld the ranks of death.**—He also was endowed with second sight, which he uses in Canto IV.

168. **Ben-Shie.**—A female spirit, whose shrieks or lamentations were supposed to precede the death of a chieftain in certain families. Usually spelled banshee.

169. **Sounds.**—Ancestors slain in battle, who now come riding along the bank.

171. **Shingly.**—Gravelly, pebbly.

189. **Cubit's length.**—A cubit is about eighteen inches. The cross was therefore small and easily carried.

190-194. The yew was a favorite tree for graveyards, and the yew wood from which the cross was made had grown in the clan's burial place on Inch Cailliach, an island near the lower end of Loch Lomond.

179-281. What are the three curses of the cross, and how is each symbolized?

286-287. Note the time and place of the muster. Trace the journey of the cross from place to place.

300. **Dun deer's hide.**—Dun, or grayish brown. Malise is wearing Highland brogues, flat, heelless shoes made of deerskin, not unlike Indian moccasins.

306. **Short and springing footstep.**—Highlanders were famed for the ease with which they crossed morasses in which ordinary walkers floundered. The phrase explains their method.

310. **Scaur.**—Precipice.

314. Note all the names given the cross in this canto and discuss their appropriateness.

330-339. Note the variety of occupations in which Clan Alpine engaged, and the instant loyalty to the chieftain's summons.

348-600. Trace on the map the journey of the cross.

349. **Duncraggan's huts.**—The tiny village of Duncraggan, the end of the first stage of the journey. A new messenger takes the cross here.

369. **Coronach.**—A Highland dirge or lament. Note the beautiful simile.

386. **Correi.**—A circular hollow on a mountain side.

387. **Cumber.**—Trouble, distress.

394. **Stumah.**—Duncan's hunting dog. Does his introduction add to the pathos of the scene?

419-441. Note this woman's loyalty to her chieftain and her hardihood. It will be tested again in the poem.

452-453. The personifications make the journey more vivid.

461. **Chapel of St. Bride.**—A Gothic chapel at the southern end of Loch Lubnaig.

485. **Coif-clad.**—See note to Canto I, 365.

546. **Bracken.**—A coarse kind of fern which grows to a height of two or three feet. It is a common plant in the Scotch mountains.

570. **Midnight blaze.**—The growth on the Scottish moors is often set fire to, in order that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage resulting from the destruction of the old heather.

596. Note the size of the gathering and the fine simile that leads up to it.

601. With this line the scene changes abruptly to the mountain of Ben Venue, where Roderick had been superintending the preparations for defense. See if you can find out why he was so careful about this particular locality.

607-610. **Rednock.**—The points here mentioned are along the line of the River Forth.

611-620. Why was Roderick afraid on Ellen's account?

622. **Coir-nan-Uriskin.**—Scott says: "This is a very steep and

most romantic hollow in the mountains of Ben Venue, overhanging the southern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch trees. . . . Tradition has ascribed to the Urisk, who gives name to the cavern, a figure between a goat and a man. . . precisely that of the Grecian Satyr." Each wild recess had its own Urisk, but the whole order of Urisks held regular meetings in this cave in Ben Venue.

656. **Satyrs.**—Urisks meeting in their cave.

664. **Beal-nam-bo.**—A famous pass on the other side of Ben Venue through which the cattle taken on Lowland raids were driven into the Trossachs.

713. **Ave Maria.**—Hail Mary!

757-764. The heather, from six to twenty-four inches in height, which covered the whole hillside at Lanrick Mead, would present an effect of blended black and green, from the black stems and the green of the bracken. From the fact that the broom and heath-bell are in bloom we know that the season is early summer; the purple bloom of the heather would not appear until late August. The dominating colors in the Mac Alpine plaid are black and green, and thus the clansmen's kilts would harmonize so completely with the background of hillside as practically to be invisible.

CANTO IV. THE PROPHECY.

10. **Conceit.**—Fancy.

19. **Braes of Doune.**—Malise has returned from scouting in the Lowland territory. Note all of Roderick's preparations for the expected battle.

36. **Boune.**—Prepared.

46-54. Does this care for the clan's safety suggest a reason for Roderick's popularity?

63. **Taghairm.**—A method of forecasting the future used by the Highlanders. Scott describes it: "A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild,

and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation, he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits, who haunt these desolate recesses."

73. **Kern.**—A name for light-armed infantry used in the Highlands and in Ireland. In Canto V, 349, kern is meant as a term of contempt.

74. **Beal 'maha.**—A pass near the lower end of Loch Lomond much used in raids into the Lowlands.

77. **Dennan's Row.**—A point about six miles north of Beal 'maha.

82-84. **Boss and Hero's Targe.**—The boss is the projection from the center of a shield. Targe, or target, is the name of a round shield, covered with bull-hide, used until a late period by the Highlanders.

132-133. Memorize, and note the influence of the prophesy on the superstitious Highlanders. See how it is fulfilled.

140. **A spy.**—Who may this be?

152-153. **Moray and Mar.**—The titles of two of the leading earls of Scotland. A silver star was the Moray emblem, and a sable pale, which means a black band running up and down the shield, the cognizance of Mar.

160. **Earn.**—Loch Earn is northeast of Loch Katrine.

161-169. Why does Roderick change the order of battle? Give two reasons.

217-235. What two reasons does Ellen give for her father's departure? When have we had a former example of Allan-bane's prophetic power?

223. **Trowed.**—Believed.

231. **Cambus-kenneth's fane.**—An abbey about a mile from Stirling.

244-245. Mark these lines and observe their literal fulfillment.

261. **Ballad of Alice Brand.** An excellent example of Scott's mastery of ballad-writing, but something of a digression from the story.

262. **Mavis and merle.**—Song-thrush and blackbird.

267. **Wold**.—A stretch of open country.

274 **Glaive**.—A broadsword.

277. **Pall**.—A rich cloth, or mantle.

283. **Darkling**.—In the dark. See Keat's "Ode to a Nightingale."

285. **Vair**.—The fur of the squirrel, possibly used to trim the pall.

298. **Woned**.—Dwelled.

306. —**Fatal green**. Green was the favorite color of the fairies, who were offended when mortals wore it and sought to wreak vengeance on them.

355. **Snatched away**.—Stolen by the fairies though believed by his friends to have died.

357. **Wist**.—The past tense of wit, to know.

358. **Durst sign**.—The sign of the cross was believed to have the power to dispel enchantment.

407-414. Fitz-James' first offer. Note Ellen's answer. What are his two other offers and what reply does Ellen make to them?

468. **I am no courtly lord**. Is Fitz-James telling the truth in this?

494-497. When had Fitz-James passed this point before? Compare his feelings on each occasion.

506. **Weeds**.—Garments. We still say "widow's weeds."

511. **Gaudy broom**.—The vivid yellow of the broom plant against the dark background would attract Blanche's attention.

531-532. **Allan and Devan**.—Lowland streams near Stirling.

555. **Maudlin**.—The usual English pronunciation of the name Magdalen, preserved in Magdalen College, Oxford.

559. **Pitched a bar**.—Still an amusement in rural Scotland. It gave rise to the modern college sport of throwing the hammer.

586. **Clansman**.—A member of a clan, a Highlander, as distinct from a Lowlander.

590-605. Note the warning conveyed to Fitz-James by the metaphors used in this song. What idea is conveyed by "a stag of ten?"

627. **Ambushed kin**.—Where were they? See Canto III, 757-767.

734-796. Observe how the bold and fearless bearing of Fitz-James wins the unwilling admiration of the mountaineer.

771-772. **A mighty augury.**—What is it?

778. **Honor's laws.**—What laws of honor has Fitz-James invoked?

798. **Purpled.**—Wooded mountains in a country with clear, dry air appear blue in the distance. The purple tint of the Scotch mountains is due to the moist atmosphere.

CANTO V. THE COMBAT.

95. **In Doune had peaceful hung.**—Compare with Malise's report, Canto IV, 34-37.

124. **Albany.**—The Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland for a part of the time during the boyhood of James V.

136-169. Do you think that Roderick makes a good defense?

186. **By promise tied.**—Compare with Fitz-James's oath, Canto IV, 685-688.

253. **Jack.**—A sleeveless leathern jacket worn by soldiers.

302-303. Scotland was invaded by the Romans under Agricola in 80 A. D. They never succeeded in conquering the Caledonians, but traces of Roman camps are frequently to be found.

315. **Vantageless.**—In what way had he had the advantage of Fitz-James before?

356. **Carpet knight.**—A soldier who neglects fighting for the society of ladies.

379-436. One of the best descriptions of a duel in literature. In what does its excellence consist? Why is Fitz-James the victor?

462. **A fairer freight.**—Who was to have been the fairer freight?

484-505. Scott took the same ride on horseback, to see whether it could be done in the time allotted in the poem.

503. **Bulwark of the North.**—Why was Stirling Castle called by this name?

525. **St. Serle.**—A saint invented by Scott for the rhyme.

541-548. Has Douglas any hope of the king's mercy?

544. **Bride of heaven.**—A nun.

550 **By his sovereign bled.**—James II. stabbed the Earl of Douglas in Stirling Castle in 1452. See the Introduction.

562. **Morrice-dancers.**—The morrice, or morris, dance was a grotesque dance performed by persons in costume. It was originally a Spanish dance, acquired from the Moors, and became very popular in England and Scotland in the Middle Ages. See Scott's novel, "The Abbot."

594. **The Commons' King.**—James V. was so-called because of his popularity with the people.

603-608. Such would probably be Roderick's fate if he yielded to the king as Fitz-James had urged.

614. **Robin Hood.**—Robin Hood was the central figure in the Mayday games popular in England and Scotland, and these games were sometimes called after him. This is another indication that the time represented in the poem is early summer. Scathe-lock, or Scarlock, was one of Robin Hood's archers, as also was Mutch, usually known as Much, the Miller's Son.

621-662. What do you think of the king's manner towards Douglas?

660. **Ladies' Rock.**—This spot is still showed to visitors. It is half-way down the cliff on which Stirling Castle stands

696. **Bourdeaux.**—A French seaport, a center of wine exportation.

698. **Lufra.**—Note the dogs which have been introduced in the poem. Scott was a great dog-lover.

828-835. These lines are much quoted. They probably refer to the events of the French Revolution, which Scott abhorred.

839. **John of Mar.**—An imaginary character. There was no Earl of Mar at this time.

887. **Earl William.**—The crowd feels that Stirling Castle is an ominous place for a Douglas. Why?

CANTO SIX. THE GUARD ROOM.

15. **Gyve.**—Fetter. Up to the time of Dickens, debtors could be imprisoned for debt. His novels helped to bring reform.

47. **Adventurers.**—Mercenary soldiers were introduced into Scotland by James V., in the form of a small body-guard called

the Foot Band. Compare them with the king's feudal supporters, the barons and their vassals, who gave military service in return for their lands; and again with the clansmen, who supported their chiefs in the Highlands and on the Border.

129. **Glee-maiden.**—The jongleurs, or jugglers, who went about the land as strolling players, were always attended by a glee-maiden, whose duty was dancing and tumbling.

152. **Tartan screen.**—Her plaid, which she had worn over her head and shoulders.

169 **Forest laws.**—Instituted in England by the Normans after the Conquest. The penalties for poaching were very severe.

170. **Needwood.**—A royal forest in Staffordshire, England.

177. **Halberd.**—A weapon which was a combination of spear and battle-axe.

199. **Errant damosel.**—A maiden wandering in search of adventure

210-212. Why does the sight of the ring make the soldiers respectful?

234. **Barret-cap.**—A cloth cap worn by soldiers. Note Brent's rough courtesy. He will not share the money, but puts Ellen's purse in his cap as a favor from a lady, after the manner of chivalry.

245. **Tenth in descent.**—What had Malcolm Graeme called Allan in the latter part of Canto III?

266. **Laboring steer.**—To plough with oxen, to farm.

277. **Wheel.**—An instrument used in executions, especially in France.

295. **Leech.**—Doctor. In the Middle Ages blood-letting was much favored in medical practice. The bleeding was done by a worm, the leech.

303. **Roderick Dhu.**—Why did the guard make the mistake of taking Roderick for Allan's master instead of Douglas? How is the plot served by this mistake?

306. **Prore.**—Prow.

347. **Dermid's race.**—The Clan Campbell. Many of the other Highland clans were enemies of the Campbells.

369-587. **Battle of Beal' An Duine.** A battle very similar to

the one described, and closing with the same incident, actually took place in this pass, but at a period much later than the story. Make a rough diagram showing the arrangement of Moray's and Mar's forces and indicate the movements of the battle.

452. **Tinchel.**—A name applied to a round-up of game by a great circle of hunters, which gradually closed in towards the center.

501. Note the minstrel's change of position. Why necessary?

539. **Bonnet pieces.**—Gold coins showing the king's head wearing a bonnet instead of a crown.

565 **Duncraggan's widowed dame.**—Where have we seen her before?

665. Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman. Who sings this song, and on what evidence do you base your conclusion?

693. **Snowdoun's graceful knight.**—See Canto I. 591.

726. **Presence.**—The throng of courtiers amidst whom Ellen expected to see the king.

740. **And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King!**—How does Ellen discover that Fitz-James is the king? What hints have you had from time to time of his real identity?

790. **James Fitz-James.**—Fitz is the Norman term for "son of", just as 'Mac' is the Highland and 'O', the Irish. James V. was the son of James IV.

855. **Much have I owed.**—Ancient Scottish poetry was a great solace to Scott.

860-868. Note the peculiar grace of the ending.

LISTS OF IDENTIFICATIONS, STRIKING TABLEAUX, AND NATURE PICTURES FOR REVIEW WORK.

I. Identifications. To whom do the following lines refer?

1. "A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent."
2. "Mature of age, a graceful dame."
3. "The Lady of the Bleeding Heart."
4. "The Saxons Scourge, Clan Alpine's Pride."
5. "Pattern of old Fidelity."

6. "Yon pride-swollen warrior."
7. "That monk of savage form and face."
8. "The orphan heir of Duncan's line."
9. "The Commons' King."
10. "Clan Alpine's honored Pine."
11. "The Rosebud that graces yon Island."
12. "The messenger of fate and fear."
13. "Back, beardless boy."
14. "My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart."

II. Striking Tableaux. Recall these pictures in your own words, and then identify them in the poem, and see what details you can add to make the pictures more vivid.

1. The First Appearance of the Lady of the Lake.
2. The Fallen Sword.
3. Ellen's Song to Fitz-James at the Lodge.
4. Ellen's Farewell to Fitz James.
5. Ellen's Meeting with her Father and Malcolm.
6. The Return of Clan Alpine.
7. Roderick's Proposal.
8. The Quarrel between Roderick and Malcolm (Two scenes)
9. Brian Delivering his Anathema.
10. Stumah at the Bier.
11. Angus's Farewell.
12. The Cross at St. Brides' Chapel.
13. Roderick Listening to Ellen's "Ave Maria".
14. Fitz-James and Ellen at the Goblin's Cave.
15. The Death of Blanche of Devan,—Fitz-James's Oath.
16. "And Stranger, I am Roderick Dhu."
17. Fitz-James against the Rock.
18. The Combat at Coilantogle Ford.
19. Douglas addressing the Burghers.
20. Ellen and John de Brent.
21. The Battle Scene in the Trossachs.
22. The Death of Roderick.
23. "And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King!"
24. " 'Fetters and Warder', for the Graeme."

III Nature Pictures. Review the following carefully:

1. The moon on Monan's Rill.
2. Sunset in the Trossachs, and on Loch Katrine.
3. Sunrise on Loch Katrine.
4. Lanrick Mead.
5. The Path to Coilantogle Ford.
6. The scene to South and East of the Highlands.
7. The Storm during the Battle.

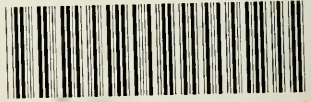
THEME SUBJECTS.

1. Clan Loyalty.
2. Highland Hospitality.
3. Highland Superstitions.
4. The Anathema of the Fiery Cross.
5. The Journey of the Cross.
6. The Old Harper.
7. The Battle of Beale an' Duine.
8. Roderick Dhu's Defense.
9. Loch Katrine at Sunset and Sunrise.
10. The Songs of the Poem.
11. The Surprises of the Poem.
12. Clan Alpines' Return from a Raid.
13. Clan Alpine in Ambush on Lanrick Mead.
14. The Trossachs.
15. The Royal Hunt.
16. Dramatic Incidents.
17. Stirling Castle.
18. Duncraggan's Widow.
19. Snowdown's Knight.
20. Malcolm Graeme.
21. Historical Foundation for Characters and Incidents. (See Scott's Tales of a Grandfather, Chapters, XXVI and XXVII.)
22. The Douglas.
23. Blanche of Devan.
24. The Ballad of Alice Brand.





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